

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 032
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

CONFIDENTIAL BRASILIA 1116

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, BR
SUBJ: ESTADO REPORTS STRONG INTERNAL REACTION TO U.S. PRESSURES

1. SUMMARY. LENGTHY REVIEW IN ESTADO DE SAO PAULO
OF DEVELOPMENT OF TENSION OVER NUCLEAR ISSUE CLAIMED US-GOB
RELATIONS HAD REACHED THE VERGE OF RUPTURE. ARTICLE STRESSED
THAT GOB STRATEGY OF SILENCE HAD BEEN ABANDONED IN RESPONSE TO
SECRETARY'S INTERVIEW AND A TOUGH POSTURE STRUCK IN GOB'S
REPLY TO SECRETARY'S JAN. 27 COMMUNICATION. ARTICLE WARNED
THAT ANY UNMEASURED RESPONSE FROM THE USG WOULD HAVE CAUSED
A SERIOUS IMPASSE IN RELATIONS. GOB HAD PREPARED AN "ARSENAL"
OF RESPONSES WHICH WOULD HAVE BEGUN WITH RECALL OF AMBASSADOR
FROM WASHINGTON; BRAZIL HAD REACHED "A MAXIMUM POINT OF
FLEXIBILITY IN ITS PRAGMATISM". U.S. HAD REALIZED NEXT
MEASURE WOULD BE MUCH MORE SERIOUS LEADING TO A MORE PER-
MANENT BREAK IN RELATIONS AND HAD GIVEN IN. ARTICLE
REPRESENTS A CAREFULLY BRIEFED, THOUGH SELF-SERVING PIECE
BY APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF ITAMARATY. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN A LENGTHY FEB. 6 REVIEW OF THE PROCESS BY WHICH
TENSIONS HAD DEVELOPED IN USG-GOB RELATIONS, ESTADO DE SAO
PAULO SAID BRAZILIAN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES ARE WONDERING HOW AND
WHEN USG-GOB RELATIONS WILL RETURN TO THE "NORMALITY" IN WHICH
THEY WERE CONDUCTED DURING THE KISSINGER ERA. PAPER SAID
THAT OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTRIES MUST
DEMONSTRATE "MUCH TRANQUILITY AND EXPERIENCE" IN BRINGING

THEIR RELATIONS "TO A POINT OF CONCRETE EASING OF TENSIONS, FAVORABLE TO THE INITIATION OF A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE."

3. STATING THAT NOW, WHEN EVERYONE CONSIDERS THAT THE WORST HAS PASSED, CLEARER EXPLANATIONS ARE EMERGING SO AS TO PERMIT AN APPRECIATION OF THE POINT THAT TENSIONS HAD REACHED. THE ARTICLE CALLED EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS OVER THE FRG-GOB ACCORD "AN ACID DEBATE" AND ADDED THAT USG-GOB RELATIONS HAD REACHED "A POINT OF TENSION VERY CLOSE TO RUPTURE." ARTICLE CONTAINED THAT, ACCORDING TO BRAZILIAN SPECIALISTS, THE GOB HAD BEEN PERPLEXED BY CERTAIN ATTITUDES TAKEN BY US AUTHORITIES "ESPECIALLY SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE." ESTADO ADDED THAT SECRETARY'S JANUARY 31 INTERVIEW, PROPOSING DELAY IN THE EXECUTION OF THE NUCLEAR ACCORD, HAD BEEN THE CRUCIAL POINT OF DISAGREEMENT AND THE GESTURE WHICH LEFT RELATIONS ON THE VERGE OF RUPTURE. VANCE'S STATEMENTS HAD BEEN REGARDED AS "UNDIPLOMATIC" AND HAD CAUSED "STRONG IRRITATION" AND "TOTAL RAGE" IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES, WHICH HAD BELIEVED THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE BEEN AN IMPLICITY DECLARATION OF SUBMISSION TO US INTERESTS.

4. ESTADO CLAIMED GOB HAD BEEN IRRITATED SUFFICIENTLY TO CHANGE ITS STRATEGY FROM SILENCE TO AN OFFENSIVE POSITION IN DEFENSE OF ITS POSITION. THE FIRST VISIBLE REACTION WAS THE BRIEF ITAMARATY RESPONSE: "THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT SEES NO POSSIBILITY OF AN INTERRUPTION OR SUSPENSION IN THE EXECUTION OF THE ACCORD." PAPER CONTINUED THAT UNEXPECTED AND ATYPICAL RESPONSE TO SECRETARY VANCE SIGNIFIED AN AGGRESSIVE, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT JUSTIFIABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US. INITIAL PERPLEXITY AND IRRITATION GAVE WAY TO GOB CHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE NEW US ADMINISTRATIONS AS "AMATUERISH." THERE WAS ALSO CONCERN ABOUT A "LOSS OF CONTROL" PRESIDENT CARTER OVER HIS MOST IMPORTANT ADVISERS. THE BRAZILIAN POSITION WAS BUTTRESSED BY STATEMENTS FROM FRG AND ARGENTINE FOREIGN OFFICES, SPEAKING OUT AGAINST US INTERFERENCE (THOUGH THERE HAD BEEN SOME DOUBTS ABOUT BONN'S ABILITY TO RESIST).

5. ACCORDING TO THE ESTADO, THE GOB FINALLY DECIDED ON FEB 2 TO PLAY ITS MOST POWERFUL DIPLOMATIC CARD. SILVEIRA SENT TO VANCE A "HARD AND AFFIRMATIVE" MESSAGE. THE MESSAGE POINTED OUT "THE CLIMATE OF FRIENDSHIP THAT HAS PREVAILED IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, HAS ALWAYS MADE POSSIBLE THAT THIS DIALOGUE WOULD PROCEED WITH RECIPROCAL RESPECT FOR THE POSITION OF EACH COUNTRY." (BRASILIA 0971) IN REAFFIRMING THAT "RECIPROCAL RESPECT" WAS ONE OF THE CONDITIONS FOR A DIALOGUE, SILVEIRA WAS RETURNING TO THE SAME TEXT HE HAD USED TO CONFRONT CANADIAN FORMIN JAMIESON WHEN SILVEIRA HAD

INITIALLY REPUDIATED INTERFERENCE IN THE ACCORD. ANOTHER FEATURE OF THE MESSAGE'S TOUGHNESS WAS THE LACK OF PRECISION ABOUT WHEN THE SECRETARY COULD VISIT BRAZIL. WORDING "WHEN IT IS CONVENIENT FOR HIM" IMPLIED THAT SECRETARY COULD COME WHEN HE AGREED DEFINITIVELY WITH THE BRAZILIAN POSITIONS. ESTADO NOTED THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD SAID THOSE POSITIONS WERE "ALREADY DEFINED AND ABSOLUTELY CLEAR," AND GOB WOULD ONLY DISCUSS NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION IN ITS GLOBAL ASPECTS.

6. ESTADO SAID THAT AT THAT MOMENT ANY "LESS CAREFUL" RESPONSE FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT "WOULD HAVE CAUSED SERIOUS IMPASSE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS." PAPER CONTINUED THAT THE GOB HAD ALREADY PREPARED "AN ARSENAL OF POLITICAL MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED IN CASE OF AN AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE FROM THE US." PAPER SAID FIRST MEASURE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE RECALL FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD OF THE BRAZILIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON.

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7. ACCORDING TO ESTDO THE FACT THAT WASHINGTON HAD NOT RESPONDED, MUST BE ATTRIBUTED TO ITS UNDERSTANDING THAT BRAZIL HAD REACHED "A MAXIMUM POINT OF FLEXIBILITY IN ITS 'PRAGMATISM.'" PAPER CONTINUED, "THE AMERICANS MUST HAVE REALIZED THAT THE NEXT MEASURE WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH MORE SERIOUS," AND AFTER ANALYZING THE FACTORS THAT MADE IT NECESSARY TO KEEP THE "BRAZILIAN-WASHINGTON AXIS" OPEN, AND "THEY GAVE IN FOR THE FIRST TIME."

6. COMMENT. ESTADO REVIEW REPRESENTS A CAREFULLY BRIEFED PIECE BY, WE BELIEVE, APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF ITAMARHOY, SELF-SERVINGLY DESIGNED TO MAKE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY LOOK FIRM, TOUGH AND COMPETENT TO OTHER ORGANS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND TO THE PRESS. FROM OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THEM, WE JUDGE IT TO BE A REASONABLE FACSIMILE OF EVENTS DURING THAT PERIOD FROM THE GOB'S PERSPECTIVE.

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